DARPA-BAA-15-21

Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: 04/22/2015

REMINDER

GENERAL INFORMATION

Q: If my research is relevant in this field, but is not geared specifically to meet these goals, is there a solicitation that I can respond to?
A: Yes. DARPA/BTO has an Open solicitation (DARPA-BAA-14-38) for which responses are being collected through 30 Apr 2015.

Q: Is COL Hepburn available for a call to discuss our proposed approach?
A: Please be advised that in accordance with DARPA policy in ensuring fairness to all proposers, the program manager is advised not to speak directly to potential proposers once the BAA has been published. Further, Col. Hepburn will not be able to provide comments or feedback on an approach presented via e-mail. The BAA describes the program including metrics in detail. If you have specific questions or require clarification, please submit them by email to DARPA-BAA-15-21@darpa.mil.

Q: Are Federal Laboratories and International Universities eligible to participate as collaborators in response to the BAA?
A: Per the BAA, "All responsible sources capable of satisfying the Government's needs may submit a proposal that shall be considered by DARPA." Federally Funded Research and Development Centers must adhere to the guidelines listed in Section 3.1.1 of the BAA, found on page 20. Information about Non-U.S. Organizations can be found in the following Section (3.1.2), though there are no funding restrictions applicable to any organizations responding (per Section 4.5, page 33).

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Q: Does the proposal rely on solutions from 1-2 laboratories or groups?
A: We encourage the formation of teams in this BAA. One of the opportunities for making connections for teams is the Proposers' Day, which is scheduled for April 27th in Denver (https://www.fbo.gov/spg/ODA/DARPA/CMO/DARPA-SN-15-33/listing.html).

COST/FUNDING

Q: May we request a cooperative agreement as the award instrument?
A: Per the Overview Information for the solicitation, "Types of instruments that may be awarded - Procurement Contract and Other Transactions." Additionally, "In all cases, the

Government contracting officer shall have sole discretion to select award instrument type and to negotiate all instrument terms and conditions with selectees."

Q: Can you clarify what level of detail is required for subcontractors?
A: All subcontractor proposal documentation must be prepared at the same level of detail as that required of the prime contractor.

TECHNICAL

Q: Are NHP models required for each TA?
A: Large animal models are recommended, but large animal models do not need to be non-human primates.

Q: Can human clinical research be funded as part of the BAA?
A: : Utilizing previously collected data from humans (such as published on Gene Expression Omnibus) can be referenced in the proposal and as art of the effort. Also, proposers can leverage prospective clinical investigations that are funded by other sources. Per the BAA (Section 1.1, page 10), "While DARPA anticipates proposals to this BAA to include pre-clinical in vitro and in vivo animal studies, human clinical testing and advanced drug development efforts is beyond the scope of this program and will not be supported under this solicitation."

Q: Is it possible to examine human transcriptome data in conjunction with mice and flies only as model hosts?
A: Our Program is intended to include a wide variety of potential tolerance pathways. Host tolerance induced by quorum sensing would be considered responsive to the Program Announcement. Human transcriptome data can be utilized as part of an effort related to this proposal, but DARPA will not fund human clinical research (prospective collection of samples in order to analyze human gene transcripts) as part of this program announcement.

Q: Can resistance mechanisms be explored as part of the proposals to this BAA?
A: We expect that proposals will focus on mechanisms of tolerance, and that part of the effort is establishing animal models that exhibit tolerance. It is possible that mechanisms of pathogen clearance may be part of the overall animal's response to infection, and these mechanisms can be acknowledged in the proposal, but the proposal should focus efforts on tolerance models and pathways. Per the BAA, (Section 1.1, pages 7-8), "Proposers are encouraged to examine novel mechanisms of tolerance, which may extend beyond the canonical host immune system. DARPA is not interested in host-defense mechanisms that promote pathogen elimination (i.e., resistance mechanisms), and pathogen-centric solutions encompassing disruption of processes in the pathogen such as virulence (e.g., toxin production), signaling, and replication."

Q: Is metabolic pathways/metabolomics of interest?
A: Yes. We anticipate solution will be derived from systematic approaches that explore many levels of biological systems. Solutions and novel pathways that promote tolerance

to infection may have metabolic components. As such, they would be considered responsive to the BAA.

Q: Exploration of microbial ecology and microbial membership of the microbiome may influence host tolerance to infectious diseases. Is investigation of these 'pre-host' exposures acceptable for this BAA?
A: Yes, as long as these investigations also include understanding the mechanisms of the host response that they affect.

Q: In regards to DARPA-BAA-15-21, there is little guidance on the disease model. Is a BSL-3 disease model (e.g. anthrax) of interest to DARPA for the THoR Program?
A: A specific infectious diseases model is not specified in the Broad Agency Announcement. Organisms that require handling in BSL-3 laboratories can be included as potential infectious animals models for this BAA.